

Frequently Asked Questions about the Virginia Youth Advisory Council

1) What is the purpose of V-YAC?

The Virginia Youth Advisory Council (V-YAC) is a network of young people currently in foster care and those aging out of foster care, who want to help themselves and each other become successful independent adults. Through group activities, members can also develop skills they will use throughout their lives, including decision making, working as a member of a team, volunteerism, as well as effective communication.

- V-YAC members help Virginia's foster care youth in many ways, including:
- Communicating current information about the foster care system
- Exchanging ideas that will improve foster care services
- Motivating other foster care youth to join V-YAC
- Communicating information about programs and funding for continuing education
- Providing input to local and state legislators, as well as other stakeholders regarding foster care policies and regulations

2) What are the criteria and process to attend a conference?

In order to be eligible to attend a V-YAC quarterly conference, participants must:

- Be in foster care or aging out of foster care
- Be at least 15 years old, but not yet 21 years old
- Demonstrate good self-discipline
- Be in compliance with your local department of social services foster care and/or independent living program
- Secure a recommendation from a local department of social services or designee
- Be able to follow rules

In order to attend a V-YAC quarterly conference, participants must:

- Meet the eligibility criteria listed above
- Register through your social worker and Independent Living Program Coordinator or contact at your Department of Social Services
- Receive conference attendance confirmation from the Virginia Department of Social Services Independent Living Program Events Coordinator

3) Do I have to pay to attend V-YAC conferences?

The Virginia Department of Social Services will pay for the cost associated with the youth's training, food, lodging, social activities, and transportation to and from conference related places (i.e. bowling alley).

4) How will I get to and from the conference?

The youth's custodial agency and/or the agency in charge of providing Independent Living services are responsible for the youth transportation to and from the conference site.

All youth **MUST** be accompanied by the adult responsible for their transportation until the youth completes the check-in process at the conference site. Any youth who is not accompanied by their transporter will **NOT** be allowed to check-in or attend the conference and the emergency contact person will be notified.

5) How can I become a member?

- Obtain a recommendation from your local department of social services or designee
- Completion of the orientation and four required workshops at two V-YAC conferences (youth leadership, advocacy, youth council, and communications skills)
- Demonstrate a willingness to volunteer at V-YAC Conferences
- Complete and submit a membership application
- Complete the interview process